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At the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville and Prisma Health, we are committed to fostering a culture of fairness, equity, respect and inclusion. There are numerous efforts to create a nurturing environment across both organizations, such as the Levi S. Kirkland, Sr. MD Society mentoring program, a collaborative effort in which physicians and faculty members mentor Black students during their time at the school, as well as the Hispanic Medical Society mentoring program for Hispanic/Latinx students.

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On the cover: The University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB) School of Dentistry. Photo courtesy UAB

Above: The University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School (Dell Med) Health Learning Building. Photo courtesy Dell Med
We are committed to fostering an environment that values and promotes diversity, equity and inclusion for all of the communities that we serve.

The Medical University of South Carolina is honored to receive the 2021 Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award and to once again be named a Diversity Champion and HEED award recipient by INSIGHT Into Diversity.

Learn more about our work by scanning the code.
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Closing INSIGHT

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The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has announced that it is working to expand existing and create new research partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) through its HBCU/MI Program. David Honey, deputy undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, said it is crucial that the DOD, which has the largest research and development budget of any federal agency, provide more opportunities for underrepresented researchers.

“[T]he DOD must continue to make strides in removing the barriers of equal opportunity in contracting and research partnerships,” Honey stated in an address during a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine town hall series. “This begins with developing an inclusive culture to help build trusted relationships between our university-operated contract laboratories and the HBCU [and MSI] community.”

The department currently has three affiliated research centers at HBCUs, including Howard University, the University of the District of Columbia, and Morgan State University (MSU) in Baltimore. The centers are working on projects related to artificial intelligence and machine learning, 5G cellular networks, and chatbots, said Honey. In September 2021, the department also awarded a total of $15 million to MSU and the HBCU North Carolina A&T State University to establish the Centers of Excellence in Biotechnology and Materials Science.

Additionally, the DOD offers the HBCU/MI Summer Research Program, an 11-week mentorship and STEM preparation program open to undergraduate and graduate students at MSIs. Its goal is to encourage more underrepresented scientists and engineers to pursue a career within the DOD.

“We are striving to level the playing field for all research institutions, so that the best possible expertise is made available to the department,” Honey said. “The DOD strives to harness the technological and scientific knowledge of a community that represents the wide-ranging backgrounds of the American people.”

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Congratulations to the dental school recipients of the 2021-2022 INSIGHT INTO DIVERSITY Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award

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Known for its innovative and interdisciplinary approach to education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, the University of Alabama at Birmingham is an internationally renowned research university and academic medical center and the state of Alabama's largest single employer, with an economic impact exceeding $7 billion annually on the state. UAB is proud to be recognized as a 2021 HEED Award recipient and 2021 Diversity Champion by INSIGHT Into Diversity.

Diversity at the UAB School of Optometry
The UAB School of Optometry aspires to make significant contributions to eye and vision care knowledge and vision science and to provide meaningful service to humanity. As one of the top optometry programs in the nation, the School is fully integrated into an academic health center. As a result, small classes of no more than 55 students are embedded within the vast network of academic and clinical resources offered by UAB. Among optometry schools, the student body, faculty and staff are one of the most diverse and have been recognized by the University as well as others. The environment is lively, providing opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from across our campus network and beyond.

Open Faculty Positions
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The School of Optometry seeks applicants whose central research focuses on cutting-edge biomedical sciences applied to vision and the visual system. The school's research program priorities include cellular and molecular biology of the eye, physiology, pharmacology, microbiology, genetics, stem cell biology, biomedical optics and imaging, dry eye and contact lens, myopia, concussion, psychophysics and other topics.

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APPLY: Submit your application at https://uab.peopleadmin.com. The posting number for this position is F1476P.
READ: It’s Not Free Speech: Race, Democracy, and the Future of Academic Freedom
For many universities, upholding ideals of academic freedom while also promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives can at times seem like trying to meet conflicting objectives. Authors Michael Bérubé and Jennifer Ruth argue that the recent racial justice movement and the influence of social media necessitate a reimagining of academic freedom practices and policies. By separating the concepts of academic freedom and free speech, Bérubé and Ruth believe it’s possible for colleges to create clear parameters that distinguish open inquiry from hateful rhetoric. Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

WATCH: The Beauty of Blackness
In 1973, Eunice Johnson, the creator of Jet and Ebony magazines, made history by launching Fashion Fair, the first cosmetics line designed exclusively for African American women. Although the brand developed a prestigious reputation and was even sold internationally, it eventually went into decline and was shuttered in 2019. Featuring interviews with beauty experts, makeup artists, models, and more, this documentary follows Fashion Fair’s rise, fall, and new revival under CEOs Cheryl Mayberry McKissack and Desirée Rogers, former White House Social Secretary for President Barack Obama. Streaming on HBO Max

LISTEN: Consider This: Parents of Transgender Youth Fear Texas’ New Anti-Trans Orders
Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) recently directed the state’s Department of Family and Child Services to investigate gender-affirming medical care as child abuse. Although the order was temporarily blocked, it has caused panic for many families and reflects a larger wave of anti-LGBTQ legislation gaining traction around the nation. In this episode of NPR’s podcast Consider This, host Ailsa Chang speaks with two parents who are raising transgender children in Texas and the emotional toll the order has taken on their families. Available on npr.org and all major podcast apps

The 2022 INSIGHT Into Diversity HEED Award applications are now available. The deadline to apply is June 30. Learn more at insightintodiversity.com/HEED.
A recent report from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) found that 84 percent of student affairs professionals experience a level of stress and crisis management responsiveness that may lead to burnout.

The report, titled *The Compass Report: Charting the Future of Student Affairs*, also showed that more than 80 percent of those in the field feel underappreciated by their institution, and 70 percent believe they are not adequately compensated for their work responsibilities.

The research is based on an 18-month project by the NASPA Task Force on the Future of Student Affairs to identify issues and trends that could affect the industry in the years ahead. The task force conducted a national survey of more than a dozen focus groups consisting of more than 950 faculty, graduate students, and administrators working in 100 student affairs offices.

Some administrators attribute these feelings to 80-hour workweeks. Others say it is a struggle to find mentorship at their institution and throughout the field due to siloing and difficulties with changing career tracks.

“There are very few truly generalist positions,” an unnamed student affairs vice president said in a focus group. “So once you’re tracked as a career [advising] person or a student union person, it’s hard to shift to a different student affairs domain of practice. And I think that limits our profession a great deal.”

One of the other major challenges the industry faces is race relations and other diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, according to the report. Only 32 percent of all survey respondents think their institution is “actively and adequately” addressing racial justice, campus climate, and equity concerns. However, 62 percent believe their institution will make advancing social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) initiatives a top priority in the next five years, and the same number of participants agree that they currently work in a welcoming and inclusive environment that values JEDI.

The data also found that 61 percent of respondents plan to remain in the field for the next five years, and 57 percent would encourage others to enter the profession during the same time frame.

NASPA’s recommendations for institutional leaders include providing transparent salary information, renewing commitments to JEDI initiatives, allowing open communication for feedback and accountability, addressing staff care systemically, and allowing more flexibility to work remotely.
University of Nevada, Reno Agricultural Programs Provide Meat, Produce to Students Experiencing Food Insecurity

The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) recently announced that locally sourced beef and produce will be available at its on-campus food pantry, Pack Provisions, for students and other campus members experiencing food insecurity. The food will be supplied by Wolf Pack Meats and the Desert Farming Initiative, two agricultural programs of the Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station at the UNR College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources.

Wolf Pack Meats is a U.S. Department of Agriculture-inspected meat processing plant that provides students with firsthand experience in meat production, distribution, and packaging. The facility also offers harvesting and processing services to local farmers. Through the new partnership, Pack Provisions will purchase 150 pounds of ground beef per month from Wolf Pack Meats for its pantry.

The Desert Farming Initiative is a commercial farm at UNR that “seeks to advance climate-smart farming and food sovereignty in the region through demonstration, education, research, and outreach,” according to a university news release. While a partnership between the initiative and Pack Provisions has been ongoing for three years, it has recently expanded to support more students.

“The partnership has grown significantly,” stated the initiative’s director, Jill Moe, in the release. “We’ve [gone] from having periodic donations of extra produce to Pack Provisions to now having year-round weekly deliveries of fresh organic fruit and vegetables from the university farm to feed students in need. It’s now truly a model ‘farm-to-food-pantry’ program.”

Accessing healthy and balanced meals is a significant challenge for many college students. In a 2020 university survey, one in four UNR students reported experiencing food insecurity. Pack Provisions received more than 4,000 visits during the 2020-2021 academic year, which was nearly double that of the previous year, according to the news release.

IN BRIEF

Our June issue will focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and initiatives at Fine Arts Schools across the U.S. This special report presents a unique opportunity to showcase your university’s fine art programs to the readers of INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. This issue will also celebrate LGBTQ Pride Month.

The advertising deadline is May 9. For advertising information, email ads@insightintodiversity.com.

INSIGHT Into Diversity®
The University of Louisville is home to a community of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Working together, we address global challenges and drive needed change to build a better world here and beyond.

The eQuality program within the School of Medicine includes a dynamic curriculum focused on providing compassionate and inclusive care for the LBTQ community, gender non-confirming individuals and persons affected by the differences of sex development (DSD). It is the first medical school in the nation to fully integrate this training into coursework.

Providing dental care to underserved areas is critical to the mission of the School of Dentistry. With partnerships from the Red Bird Clinic in eastern Kentucky to the UofL Dental Clinic in western Kentucky and the Shawnee Clinic in Louisville in between, UofL's dental students are expanding access to deserving patients while learning to be leaders in the health field.

Using collaboration and innovation, UofL is a dynamic force in establishing a community of care inside and outside the university.
Gregory Vincent, EdD, JD, has been named president of Talladega College. Vincent previously served as a professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation and executive director of the Civil Rights and Education Initiative at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

Victoria Daniels, JD, has been selected as chief supplier diversity officer at the University of Delaware in Newark. Daniels was manager of supplier diversity at the New York Power Authority in White Plains.

Jill Baren, MD, is the first woman to be named president of Lake Forest College. Baren previously served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.

Rui Li, PhD, will serve as the inaugural assistant vice president for online and distance education at Bradley University in Peoria. Li was assistant vice president for digital learning and innovation at West Chester University of Pennsylvania.

Kahan Sablo, EdD, has been selected as vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Adler University in Chicago. Sablo previously served as dean of inclusive excellence at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Lee Gill, JD, has been named vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Louisville. Gill was chief diversity officer and special assistant to the president for inclusive excellence at Clemson University in South Carolina.

Hubert Benitez, DDS, PhD, has been appointed president of American International College in Springfield. Benitez previously served as vice president for strategic initiatives and academic innovation and acting chief inclusion officer at Rockhurst University in Missouri.

Laurie McCauley, DDS, PhD, has been selected as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. McCauley was dean at the university’s school of dentistry.

Rodney Priestley, PhD, has been named dean of the Graduate School at Princeton University. Priestley previously served as the Pomeroy and Betty Perry Smith Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering and vice dean for innovation at the university.

Suneetha Vaitheswaran will serve as the inaugural university data officer at Princeton University. Vaitheswaran was executive director of analytics and business information solutions at the University of Chicago.

Toyin Tofade, PharmD, has been appointed president of Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Tofade previously served as dean and professor at the Howard University College of Pharmacy in Washington D.C.

Jennifer Coyle, OD, has been named president of Pacific University in Forest Grove. Coyle was dean of the Southern California College of Optometry in Fullerton.

Richard Reddick, EdD, has been selected as senior vice provost for curriculum and enrollment and dean of the School of Undergraduate Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. Reddick previously served as associate dean for equity, community engagement, and outreach in the university’s college of education.

Shari McMahan, PhD, is the first woman to be named president of Eastern Washington University in Cheney. McMahan was provost and vice president for academic affairs at California State University, San Bernardino.

Marlene De La Cruz-Guzmán, PhD, will serve as inaugural vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Viterbo University in La Crosse. De La Cruz-Guzmán previously served as director of the Office for Multicultural Success and Retention at Ohio University in Athens.

Has your campus recently hired a new administrator? INSIGHT Into Diversity would like to publish your news. Please email editor@insightintodiversity.com.
Growing up in California, Stephanie White’s parents wanted her to have the opportunities they didn’t have. They advocated for her to have more educational prospects and attend better schools to give her an advantage, all while making sure she understood the roots of her Black family history.

As a pediatrician, White was drawn to the field because it represents hope, optimism, and prevention. As the associate dean of diversity and inclusion at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, White also takes those themes outside of the clinic setting, developing strategies to ensure that diversity and inclusion is woven within the fabric of the UK experience.

Her goal: to ensure that our students, faculty and staff feel valued. And to make sure our future physicians and researchers are prepared to provide the best care for our communities.

At the University of Kentucky, we are creating spaces for inclusivity to thrive.

Learn more about the UK College of Medicine’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: med.uky.edu/diversity-inclusion
This May marks the 16th annual celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month, a time to “pay tribute to the generations of Jewish Americans who helped form the fabric of American history, culture, and society,” according to the Library of Congress.

One notable event marking this occasion in 2022 is the reopening of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) in Philadelphia thanks to a donation from entrepreneur Stuart Weitzman. The Smithsonian-affiliated museum, which was renamed in Weitzman’s honor, has operated solely online for nearly two years after closing its doors in 2020 due to financial hardship. During this time, it continued to encourage visitors to learn about Jewish history in the U.S. by providing virtual museum tours, posting numerous online exhibitions and educational videos, and hosting a wide variety of programs, all of which highlight the achievements and struggles of American Jews.

Even with the physical location’s reopening, NMAJH will maintain its virtual museum, which allows users to simulate a walk-through of the building’s core exhibitions for free.

“As the repository of the largest collection of Jewish Americana in the world, with more than 30,000 objects, NMAJH has developed extensive institutional experience in preservation, conservation, and collections management supporting the fulfillment of its mission to preserve the material culture of American Jews,” the museum’s website states.

In the months leading up to Jewish American Heritage Month, the NMAJH hosted and participated in several major virtual events, including the international Jewish Soldiers & Fighters in World War II Conference. In addition, recent online exhibitions include the story of Siegmund Lubin, a German-Jewish immigrant who was an early pioneer in the silent film industry, and an examination of the impact of tuberculosis on Jewish American families in the late 19th century.

In commemoration of Jewish American Heritage Month, the NMAJH is launching a new exhibit that will focus on the rise of anti-Semitic violence by highlighting the January 2022 hostage situation at the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Colleyville, Texas. The exhibit will feature several artifacts from the incident and a video interview between the hostages and Jonathan Sarna, a Brandeis University history professor and chief historian at NMAJH. The museum is also offering in-person and virtual programs that examine the events at Colleyville within the broader context of modern anti-Semitism.

The Colleyville artifacts will be on display for one year before becoming part of a traveling exhibition. Although
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the terrorist act falls more in the realm of current events than history, Sarna told the newspaper Jewish Exponent that the event is important to highlight because it creates a link between the past and present by juxtaposing historic and modern acts of anti-Jewish hatred.

“You want a historical exhibit to reach up to the present,” Sarna told the publication.

In addition to the current and upcoming exhibitions, NMAJH also features several online education programs aimed at incorporating Jewish American history into classroom curricula across the country. The programs primarily focus on immigration, Jewish and American identity, religious liberty, and societal change. For example, the Becoming American program focuses on Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe in the early 20th century. It is available to third- through twelfth-grade classrooms as well as adult learners. Low-income educational institutions can receive need-based scholarships to gain access to these materials. The museum also provides a free OpenBook curriculum that educators can use to plan lessons about Jewish history, including American responses to the Holocaust, Jewish life in colonial America, and the early 20th century labor movement.

“NMAJH presents educational programs and experiences that preserve, explore, and celebrate the history of Jews in America,” museum CEO Misha Galperin wrote in a 2021 American Alliance of Museums blog post. “Its purpose is to connect Jews more closely to their heritage and to inspire in people of all backgrounds a greater appreciation for the diversity of the American Jewish experience and the freedoms to which Americans aspire.”

For more information visit nmajh.org.
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Single-Sex Colleges Lag Behind in Institutional Support for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students

By Mariah Stewart

Nearly a decade ago, Rose Wong became the face of the movement for transgender students at single-sex colleges after she was denied acceptance in 2013 to Smith College, an all-women’s institution. By sharing her rejection letter with the media, Wong spearheaded a nationwide trend of historically women’s colleges (HWCs) expanding their admissions to accept members of the transgender and gender nonconforming community.

Now, many traditional single-sex schools openly admit these students, but few appear to offer unique programs or initiatives to recruit, retain, or support them.

“Many historically women’s colleges have become more trans-inclusive in their admissions policy without making other institutional changes to support trans students,” says Genny Beemyn, PhD, director of the Stonewall Center at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and coordinator of Campus Pride’s Trans Policy Clearinghouse.

Beemyn, who uses the pronouns they and them, says HWCs can improve by offering more gender-inclusive restrooms and housing, providing spaces for transgender women to play sports, and educating faculty and staff about misgendering students with the she/her pronoun assumption. Beemyn says the struggle for schools to be more inclusive “reflects a legacy of cisnormativity and the failure of cis administrators to understand the needs of trans students” as well as a failure to include these students in the process of making these institutions more inclusive.

Some HWCs have recently taken unique steps to become more welcoming. At Barnard College, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion launched a webpage in 2021 titled “Trans@Barnard” that provides resources such as housing accommodation requests and updated name forms. The college’s Center for Engaged Pedagogy developed a guide and offers workshops for faculty on gender inclusion in the classroom. In response to feedback solicited from the campus community, Barnard also hired a LGBTQ+ Outreach Coordinator to support students, according to Jennifer Rosales, PhD, vice president for inclusion and engaged learning and chief diversity officer.

“Student Experience and Engagement hosts monthly meetups for students of color; students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA); and students who identify as queer students of color,” she wrote in an email to INSIGHT. “The meetups are a space to connect, build relationships, and share experiences and resources with others who share these identities.”

Gender Nonconforming and Nonbinary Students Still Face Exclusion

Many single-sex schools adopted inclusive transgender admissions policies in the years following Wong’s rejection from Smith College, including each of the prestigious

Of the approximately 35 historically women’s colleges (HWCs) in the U.S., 23 currently have formal policies for admitting at least some transgender students, according to 2021 research by the nonprofit organization Campus Pride. Four HWCs currently have policies that exclude most transgender students from being admitted: Cottey College, Saint Mary’s College in Indiana, Salem College, and Sweet Briar College. Additionally, Meredith College and Trinity Washington University “do not indicate their policies toward transgender students, but likely discriminate against transgender women applicants because neither includes ‘gender identity’ in its nondiscrimination policy,” Campus Pride states.

Seven Sisters colleges. However, several of the written policies apply only to transgender women, excluding transgender men as well as nonbinary and gender-fluid applicants.

Recently, nonbinary students at Hollins University, a HWC in Virginia, pushed for the school to openly admit gender nonconforming and questioning students.

A Hollins applicant “must affirmatively identify herself as a woman and her application materials must support this self-identification,” according to the school’s website. “If the applicant is concerned about discrepancies in her application materials, she can speak with an admission counselor or address any
concerns in the essay or personal statement.”

This type of policy — which is inclusive of transgender students but not those who do not conform to the gender binary — is typical of HWCs, Beemyn says.

“Most [HWCs] admit trans women, even if all of the student’s documents do not have an ‘F’ on them [for female], but far fewer explicitly admit nonbinary students who were assigned female at birth, and only a few admit trans men,” they explain.

Beemyn commends Mount Holyoke College, a HWC in Massachusetts, as having a particularly inclusive admissions policy. It considers any applicant who is not a cisgender man.

“To me, [Mount Holyoke] best captures the mission of historically women’s colleges as institutions that support individuals who are oppressed because of their gender,” they say.

The first HWC to accept transgender women and nonbinary applicants was Mills College in Oakland, California, in 2014. The decision was the product of a cross-departmental committee of faculty, staff, and students that helped identify best practices for transgender and gender-fluid inclusion in college life, according to the school.

Beemyn says Mills is “definitely one of the best” when it comes to providing institutional support for LGBTQ students.

“More than most historically women’s colleges, [Mills] has thought through what it means to be admitting trans women and nonbinary students who were assigned female at birth,” they say.

To become more inclusive, HWCs need to clearly explain transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming policies on their websites “so that students know what they can expect there and can compare institutions,” Beemyn recommends.

“We have the first generation of out trans students at many historically women’s colleges,” they add. “The colleges should listen to these students about what they need and what should be changed, as they are in the best position to know.”

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
Higher Education Reacts to Florida’s ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Legislation

Advocates worry that the new law, while aimed at K-12 education, will also have grave repercussions for the LGBTQ higher education community.

By Mariah Bohanon

On March 28, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Florida’s controversial House Bill (HB) 1577 into law. Dubbed the “Don’t Say Gay” bill by critics, the legislation states that school districts in Florida “may not encourage classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in primary grade levels.” While supporters say it gives parents more control over their children’s education, critics have decried the law for having vague wording, overstepping boundaries, and promoting homophobia.

Now, as K-12 educators across the state are learning to contend with these new classroom restrictions, some Florida colleges and universities are working to support LGBTQ students in the face of legislation that experts say will have widespread negative repercussions.

“It has been proven time and time again that every time a city/state/country passes any anti-LGBTQ measures, the suicide rates increase — this is not a coincidence,” Manny Velásquez-Paredes, director of the University of North Florida (UNF) LGBTQ Center, wrote in a recent email to INSIGHT.

The increased risk of suicide and suicidal ideation for LGBTQ youth in the face of HB 1577 has been one of its critics’ greatest concerns. The Trevor Project and other leading LGBTQ organizations have issued multiple statements condemning the measure as being detrimental to a population already more vulnerable to depression, substance abuse, and suicide.

In the weeks leading up to the bill’s passage, UNF increased the availability of mental health counselors for students “to speak to someone about their fears” concerning HB 1577 and similar anti-LGBTQ legislation across the U.S., according to Velásquez-Paredes. “We have also provided our students with a safe space to come in and vent about what they are going through and created more in-person and virtual support groups,” he stated.

After the bill was signed into law, UNF hosted a Courageous Conversations event for members of the university and local community to share their concerns about the new legislation and how it might affect their lives. Velásquez-Paredes says he is worried about how his own family will be affected.

“This is dangerous, because as a parent and as a gay man, this bill will hurt my children directly and hurt my entire family,” he wrote. “Everyone warned us not to move from New York to Florida, but we did it anyway, and bills like this one make me think twice about whether or not this was the right choice for us.”

At the University of Miami (UM) LGBTQ Student Center, staff have also been focused on ensuring that students know they have a safe space and a supportive community at this time, according to director Gisela P. Vega, EdD. The center has also been working to raise awareness of how HB 1577 and similar legislation could have serious repercussions for the K-12 community and beyond.

“The biggest thing that’s happening right now is just trying to create awareness around what this bill is, [and] also letting students know what their supports are and what they can try to
Dr. Gizem Levent has explored veterinary medicine with the mindset of One Health—the interconnection of animal, human, and ecosystem health. Her research studies the interaction between food animals and foodborne pathogens, concentrating on applied and molecular epidemiology. Now, Dr. Levent has an opportunity to make a difference in animal well-being, as well as human and ecosystem health, as she joins the diverse faculty of the Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine in Amarillo as an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology.

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Photo courtesy of Weston Brooks
do to make a difference,” Vega says. The center issued a statement explaining the bill last month and continues to work with other higher education institutions and community organizations to help students connect to options when it comes to advocacy work.

In addition to hosting a rally on campus against the bill, LGBTQ students and their supporters at UM have taken other steps to combat its message. In early April, for example, a group from the university marched in Miami Beach’s Pride Parade wearing t-shirts that read “U Can Say Gay,” with a design that combines the university’s logo with a rainbow, according to Vega.

Students are a “conduit” for creating awareness around this law, she adds. While this bill is distressing to many, they are determined to fight against it.

“Students are fearful. There’s fear about what this law means, especially as you see copycat legislation rearing its head across the nation,” Vega says. “They’re really concerned, and they want to know what they can do to help.”

Claire Oueslati-Porter, PhD, director of gender and sexuality studies at UM, says she knows LGBTQ students whose concerns stem from their own K-12 school experiences. They worry that restricting honest discussion of gender identity and sexual orientation will make adolescence even more difficult for LGBTQ youth.

“I’ve had students tell me that if they didn’t have educational settings growing up where at least one or two teachers supported them, who let them talk about their identity and their sexuality, they don’t know how they would have survived,” she says.

Oueslati-Porter’s department and the UM LGBTQ Student Center recently hosted a symposium to celebrate the 10th anniversary of UM establishing a minor in LGBTQ Studies. HB 1577 was a major topic of discussion at the event, which focused on, among other issues, “how to best use academic settings like ours to do more than just create a safe space, but to create a place where there is dynamic change-building and fomenting,” she says.

She adds that, although this law is aimed at K-12 schools, it sets a dangerous precedent for all levels of education. The creation of similar policies in other states, including bans on critical race theory and restrictions on gender studies, indicate that there may be even more political interference in academia to come.

“There are going to be more and more attempts to propose reactionary legislation, and probably more organizations are going to try and monitor and surveil classrooms and lectures,” Oueslati-Porter says.

College students, for their part, have been some of the fiercest opponents to this legislation. While K-12 students across the state staged walkouts and protests leading up to the bill’s passage, LGBTQ groups and their supporters at UM, UNF, and other campuses held demonstrations in solidarity. Kyler Denk, an undergraduate psychology major at UNF, helped organize a campus rally against the law in March and has been active in raising awareness about the new policy. Students and colleges have an obligation to educate the public about this law and how it may affect young people, he says.

“It is so important to speak out against this legislation, and spaces should be created so that conversations can be had within colleges and universities,” Denk wrote in an email to INSIGHT. “Everyone should learn of the impacts that this bill has on K-12 education and LGBTQ youth.”

Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
CELEBRATING THE BEST

James Madison University is proud to celebrate a State Council of Higher Education for Virginia 2022 Outstanding Faculty Award recipient, Lauren K. Alleyne. The SCHEV Outstanding Faculty awards recognize superior accomplishments in teaching, research and public service at Virginia’s institutions of higher learning. Alleyne is a professor of English, assistant director of the Furious Flower Poetry Center and an award-winning poet. She is the author of two collections of poetry, Difficult Fruit (2014) and Honeyfish (2019) and co-editor of Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry (2020), as well as numerous journal publications. She serves as editor-in-chief of the center’s online journal, The Fight & The Fiddle, and is a founding steering committee member of the Africana Studies Workshop at JMU.

SUNRISE PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE ADERTON (’19) AND ALLEYNE BY ERICA CAVANAGH

For more, visit www.jmu.edu
Dozens of educational institutions and athletic organizations have changed the names of their mascots and sports teams in recent years in response to demand from Indigenous advocates who have called for an end to the appropriation and mockery of Native American culture. Now, some activists are pointing to the need for an even more thorough reckoning when it comes to the use of Indigenous terminology in common parlance. Among their demands is eradicating use of the word “chief” in job titles, including that of chief diversity officer (CDO).

Some government organizations, corporations, and other entities in the U.S. and Canada have already eliminated this word in favor of other options such as “senior,” “executive,” or similar descriptors. Those who oppose its usage in the context of job titles argue that, while “chief” originates from French, its significance to Native American cultures — as well as the history of its use as a pejorative against Indigenous men — renders it inappropriate for use in workplace roles. In a March 2021 op-ed in *Entrepreneur* magazine, Tiasia O’Brien, head of strategy for Seam Social Labs, explains why she refused to accept the title “chief executive officer:”

“I self-identify as an Afro-Latina woman. This identity is not based on the Indigenous heritage of America, but I understand how it feels to be oppressed and silenced. … Historically [chief] has been used as one to define leadership, but it’s also been used as a slur against native leaders. As a business founder focused on community empowerment, anything that is still being decided upon by an entire community is worth careful consideration. No title, brand name, or symbol is worth the harm of negatively impacting a culture.”

Lee Bitsóí, EdD, vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at Brandeis University, has advocated for more organizations to adopt this approach. As a member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation and a DEI expert, he recently spoke with *INSIGHT* about why he believes higher education should eliminate its use of “chief” in titles and why words matter.

**When did you first become aware that use of the word “chief” in professional titles could be problematic or considered cultural appropriation?**

The word itself comes from a French term meaning “leader,” and in Native cultures when leaders were to be identified to non-Native people, they were designated as chiefs. I found it interesting how the word was being used in the C-suite, but it didn’t really hit me until I obtained my first job as a CDO. I had a conversation in Navajo with my mother about the work that I was doing. She asked me, in English, what my job title was, and when I proudly told her “chief diversity officer,” she said, “Huh? When did you become a chief?” She explained to me that this title was supposed to be earned, not just given.

That’s when I really started to think about the use of the word, especially in diversity work. It’s an issue that’s related to the problem of Native American mascots. People thought that when the Washington Football Team finally changed their name, we would see some [progress] in the culture, but this is still an ongoing problem. For those reasons, using the term “chief” in diversity work is problematic.

**In your current job and in previous positions, you told your superiors that you did not want “chief” to be part of your title. How did you explain this?**

When I was in conversation about my title at my prior
institution, Fort Lewis College, the title chief diversity officer was posed to me. I refused it because Fort Lewis is a Native-Serving Institution. Therefore, the title was modified to vice president for diversity affairs, and that was more indicative of the work that I would be doing while being sensitive to the Native American student population as well as the Indigenous faculty and staff.

When I accepted my position at Brandeis, the title was actually listed as vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion/chief diversity officer. So when I was in conversation with the leadership team, I respectfully asked that the CDO portion be deleted and explained to them why. They said yes because Brandeis was founded on social justice values, and social justice requires inclusive language and being respectful as much as possible of other cultures.

Bitsóí recently attended the annual National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education conference where he had numerous conversations about the usage of the words “chief” and “officer” and found that most people agreed that both terms are problematic. Some diversity professionals expressed that they do not police or patrol diversity efforts, but rather that they are engaged as strategists, and thus believe “officer” is not an appropriate term either, he says. Therefore, he believes this should be a national conversation for all diversity networks and organizations.

What would you say to someone who may argue that this should not be an issue?
I would just say that diversity work is about broadening the participation of people who have not been able to participate before, and it’s not taking anything away from someone else [to change terminology]. It’s about giving a voice to people who have not had one before, and we as Native people have not had a say in these types of conversations at the national or global levels. Now that we’re speaking up and saying that this isn't right, our voices should be heard, understood, and respected.

Do you see more people in corporate America and academia becoming aware of this problem?
The diversity networks that I am a member of are starting to have this conversation. It started [to gain attention] a couple of years ago with discussions of sports team names, like the Kansas City Chiefs, Atlanta Braves, and the Cleveland Indians. I’ve had discussions with members of some organizations about this, and they had never really thought about it. They were so wedded to the concept of the C-suite that they never really stopped to consider how this could be problematic for Indigenous people.

Our strength is our people
At The Ohio State University College of Medicine, we see diversity as the uniqueness each person brings to transform the health of our communities through inclusive and innovative education, discovery and care. Receiving the 2021 Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award is a reflection of our university’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.
There is some momentum there, and I believe higher education can now be the real mover and that institutional organizations can help. We in higher education can help others understand why we should not use this term, especially in diversity titles.

**Why is it important for higher education to set an example with its use of language and titles?**

The key word there is education. What happens in diversity work is that language that’s been accepted as the norm for a long time can sometimes be difficult to change. So it requires educating people about the potential harm that the usage of the term “chief” can inflict.

You also sometimes hear this word used in the pejorative. That is accepted language, but it shouldn’t be. There are other words people use that they need to be better informed about, such as calling a meeting a powwow. A powwow is a ceremony, so it shouldn’t be used in that way in the workplace. There’s also the misnomer of the “low man on the totem pole,” but in some cultures, that figure is the most honored. We need education to inform people about why they should stop using these terms.

Are any DEI organizations or Indigenous advocacy groups raising awareness around the use of “chief” in job titles?

I don’t think so. Obviously there have been so many efforts concerning things like sports teams and mascots, but this seems to be an issue that’s more under the radar. As I mentioned, some diversity networks have started having this conversation, and most of them are in academia. As the conversation expands and more people become knowledgeable about how this term is harmful, we will see more come on board. But again, culture change is difficult.

**Can you offer some examples of preferred wording for institutions that may elect to revise their job titles?**

I think they should start with the CDO title by renaming it as vice president for DEI or, if the term “diversity officer” needs to be included, the words senior or executive could be used instead of “chief.”

When it comes to the C-suite, it may take a while for that culture to change. It will likely take time to change titles like CEO, CFO, CIO, chief human resources officer, and so forth, but I believe the change should begin with diversity officers.

Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*. Lee Bitsóí, EdD, is a member of the *INSIGHT Into Diversity* Editorial Board.
REAL DIVERSITY CHANGES WHAT LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE

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UNIVERSITIES EMBRACE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

By Erik Cliburn

When Keith Whitfield, PhD, assumed the role of president at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) in 2020, he had an ambitious, if somewhat unrealistic, goal to speak with every student on campus — all 30,000 of them. Last month, in support of that vision, he commissioned a digital version of himself that is accessible to anyone at any time as a chatbot. The conversational chatbot acts as a “one-stop shop” for information on a wide range of topics, including campus resources, enrollment data, and much more.

“I hope people feel a little more comfortable because they get to know me and feel like they are a piece of the UNLV community,” Whitfield explains. “When you feel like you belong and when you know people at your university, your success increases because it doesn’t feel odd to ask questions, and you don’t feel like there is no one you can go to.”

Creating a digital avatar of a president is one of the more innovative ways that colleges and universities have begun using artificial intelligence (AI), but UNLV is not alone in its endeavor to use this technology to support students and build community. Georgia State University (GSU) and Elon University have previously implemented some form of AI to promote student success. This approach, if balanced with effective in-person communication, can be especially beneficial for first-generation and economically disadvantaged students who are less likely to know how to navigate the college experience, Whitfield explains.

“We know that getting a college degree is not easy, so we’re always looking for ways we can try to help,” he says. The ultimate goal of the avatar is to ensure students and their families can easily access information about vital resources on campus and that it can be thought of as a “digital concierge.” Users can verbally ask or type questions to the chatbot version of Whitfield and get a response related to more than 500 topics.

“We’re hoping that rather than clicking around [on a website] looking for something, you get to talk through what you’re trying to figure out,” Whitfield says. “We don’t want students to have to go through six people to get an answer — that just means we aren’t being as efficient as we need to be.”

Whitfield, who has a background in psychology, recognized the potential for the avatar when he noticed that students were seeking information about mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. “I was worried about mental health issues and people feeling like they weren’t connected,” he explains. Since its launch in February, the most common questions the chatbot has received are related to mental health and financial aid services.

In addition to helping users, this type of AI allows the university to better gauge the needs and concerns of a larger pool of students than traditional communication methods do, says Whitfield. All user data remains anonymous, but the questions asked are collected and relayed back to the UNLV administration. That information can then be deployed to adjust policies and bolster campus programs and initiatives. The university is also considering building kiosks on campus so that the avatar is even more accessible to students and visitors.

Across the country, GSU has seen major success with the chatbot that it created in 2016. Known as Pounce, the bot was designed to maintain student enrollment and reduce “summer melt,” or the phenomenon of students — especially those who are first-generation, low-income, or underrepresented — who enroll in college but fail to attend classes in the fall.

Pounce tries to counter this problem by sending text messages to those at risk of dropping out. It provides information about financial aid, course registration, and various placement exams that often serve as barriers to re-enrollment. In its first year, Pounce reduced summer melt by 22 percent. New findings show that the chatbot also improves academic performance.

“Receiving direct text messages about their class assignments, academic supports, and course content increased the likelihood students would earn a B or higher and, for first-generation students, increased their likelihood of passing the class,” GSU stated in a press release in 2022.

“First-generation students receiving the messages earned final grades about
PRIORITIZE DIVERSITY IN YOUR HIRING PROCESS

Don't be swayed by low pricing for diversity “boosts” on other job boards. Job posts to external websites receive very little traffic and are often not higher education focused.

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Visit [insightintodiversity.com](https://insightintodiversity.com) to learn more.
Elana Zeide, a professor at the University of Nebraska College of Law and expert on the ethical implications of AI, wrote in a 2019 *EDUCAUSE Review* article that while this technology is becoming more popular in higher education, colleges have only begun to scratch the surface of its potential uses. Other possible applications include automatic course load scheduling, grading, providing additional resources to ensure success in class, and approving microloans to financially support students who are struggling, according to Zeide.

She warns, however, that institutions must use this technology ethically. Data privacy, especially regarding students, should be a top priority for schools looking to use AI. Additionally, colleges should be aware that machine learning can, in certain instances, reinforce historical biases. For example, the graduate admissions committee at The University of Texas at Austin stopped using the Graduate Admissions Evaluator algorithm after critics pointed out it was less likely to select applications from underrepresented students for human review.

“Keep in mind that for all the hype and buzz, these AI tools are just computer systems,” Zeide writes. “They can go wrong, they are created by humans, [and] their values are shaped by companies and institutions. Their data is not neutral but is defined by the historical patterns.”

Despite the potential drawbacks, AI’s usage will continue to grow among higher education institutions. The market for this technology in the education sector is expected to increase by 40 percent by 2027 from $1 billion in 2020, according to research and consulting firm Global Market Insights, Inc. However, employed effectively, ethically, and with the goal of improving equity, AI can help colleges and universities provide a better experience and education to their students, says Whitfield.

“We used to be afraid of [AI],” he says. “Now what we’re seeing is that, if used correctly, it can really be a useful tool.”

Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer for *INSIGHT Into Diversity*. 
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College Students Contend with Growing Housing Crisis

By Lisa O’Malley
From major metropolitan cities to rural areas, housing costs across the U.S. have skyrocketed. In 2021, the median home sales price rose nearly 17 percent from the year prior — the highest increase on record since 1999, according to the National Association of Realtors. While the surge in prices is affecting many Americans, college students are finding it especially difficult to acquire affordable housing while pursing a degree.

The most recent report from The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University found that nearly half, or 48 percent, of students at two-year and four-year colleges were affected by housing insecurity in 2020. Approximately 14 percent experienced homelessness at one point.

The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the high rates of housing insecurity and homelessness, the report states, by causing dormitory closures as well as layoffs and furloughs that impacted student finances. Although campuses are now open and operations are mostly back to normal at many colleges, students around the nation are continuing to report struggles with accessing affordable housing.

Many schools have recently experienced a demand for on-campus accommodations that far exceeds supply. The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Case Western Reserve University, and the University of Miami are just a few of the institutions that have informed students that housing for upperclassmen will not be guaranteed for the 2022-2023 academic year. Issues with overflow have meant some students at schools such as Tennessee State University have had to be housed in hotels until dormitories or on-campus apartments could be made available. At historically Black colleges and universities, an uptick in enrollment following the racial justice movement of 2020 has resulted in housing shortages for students at Howard University, Spelman College, and more.

Similar challenges have occurred for those seeking to live off campus. The home listing website Realtor.com conducted a survey of more than 500 college students and found that 30 percent reported having a more difficult time securing housing in 2021 than in the year prior. The persistent rise in rent prices is partly to blame, according to the website, which shows the average rent for studio apartments jumped to $1,474 nationwide in February 2022, marking a 17 percent increase from 2021. With close to 60 percent of all college students living in off-campus housing, according to the most recent National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, many are likely feeling this burden. News reports show that students at a wide variety of institutions across multiple locales have had issues finding affordable accommodations for the upcoming academic year.

While these issues have been documented in states all over the U.S., few are dealing with as significant a crunch as California, where the median price for a single-family home escalated from $588,070 in 2020 to $800,000 in 2021, according to data from the California Association of Realtors. The state already had a serious housing shortage prior to the pandemic, with a 2017 University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) study estimating that California needed at least 3 million more housing units to meet demand. Many of the state’s large colleges and universities simply lack the space to accommodate their students. For example, although there are 116 institutions in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, only 11 offer student housing, according to the CCC website. Others, including the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems, collectively had more than 16,000 students on wait lists for dorms for the fall 2021 semester, a report from the California Legislative Analyst’s Office shows.

Recently, the UC system has
Marginalized groups — such as LGBTQ individuals, people of color, and individuals with disabilities — are the most at risk for experiencing homelessness, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

constructed apartment buildings on campus. Meanwhile, graduate student workers at multiple UC campuses, including those in Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz, have been protesting for cost-of-living adjustments to mitigate the recent uptick in rent costs.

To help remedy this situation, California lawmakers approved a bill in September 2021 that provided $500 million toward expanding affordable housing options for college students in the 2022 fiscal year. While experts say the bill is a good first step, sustained financial support will be needed to make a real difference. After all, housing costs are more expensive than tuition and fees at most of the state’s public colleges and universities, according to the Public Policy Institute of California.

In addition to providing emergency grants and accommodations for students in need, several California colleges have developed broader initiatives to examine and find solutions to this crisis as well as other basic needs issues. The Center for Equitable Higher Education operates dual programs on the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) and California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt campuses. Established in 2021, the center is dedicated to researching equity gaps in higher education and promoting economic, housing, and food justice for college students.

The center is currently working on a project to evaluate the effectiveness of the College Focused Rapid Rehousing program, a state-funded initiative that connects CSU and CCC students experiencing homelessness with a community-based agency to obtain subsidized housing. As part of the program, students are also assigned a case manager who helps them access resources for mental health, academic development, and more, according to Rashida Crutchfield, EdD, the center’s director and an assistant professor of social work at CSULB.

The rehousing program is “one of the most progressive responses to homelessness among students” and a big investment for the state, Crutchfield says, which is why the center is studying how successful it is in supporting students in need.

At other colleges in the state, students are leading efforts to help those in need of shelter. The nonprofit organization Students 4 Students started with a group of individuals at UCLA who noticed many of their classmates did not have a place to sleep. In 2016, the group created the Bruin Shelter program to house up to five students at a local church near UCLA. Since then, students at UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, and the University of Southern California have created similar shelter projects on their campuses.

Other higher education institutions across the U.S. have devised innovative solutions to their housing problems as well. The College of Idaho in Caldwell became the first school to convert shipping containers into student dorms, just in time for the fall 2020 semester. In Washington State — which has the fifth largest homeless population in the country — officials at Tacoma Community College partnered with the local housing authority to provide rental assistance to students facing housing insecurity.

Crutchfield says that one of the most successful approaches schools can take is to work with a community-based organization that specializes in housing issues.

“In higher education institutions themselves are not housing experts, so those meaningful connections with community-based agencies are really critical,” she says. She adds that schools should also work with the “larger ecosystem” to enact change, such as advocating for increased financial aid and other support from the city, state, and federal government.

Regardless of the method that colleges take, the need to address student housing issues will likely increase in coming years. The demand is expected to grow from 8.5 million beds in 2020 to 9.2 million by 2031, according to a recent report from the National Multifamily Housing Council.

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. Learn how the affordable housing crisis is affecting college and university employees in Part 2 of this story in our upcoming June 2022 issue.
The Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences is dedicated to maintaining a learning and working environment in which all feel welcomed and supported in their pursuit of a career in the health professions, in educating the next generation of health professionals, and in advancing the profession through research.

Groups such as the recently launched Committee for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Accountability; Welcome Week and storytelling activities; videos that reinforce the significance of our words and actions; and service to communities with reduced access to veterinary care exemplify the ways in which CVMBS faculty, staff, and students come together to foster a positive and inclusive culture in which we learn from and care about one another.

The CVMBS is honored to be a five-time Health Professions HEED Award recipient for our diversity and inclusion efforts!
With health care and social justice at the forefront of the public consciousness over the past two years, it is now more critical than ever that medical, dental, and veterinary schools work to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within their institutions and in communities across the country. Many schools in these fields have stepped up to enhance diverse faculty and student recruitment and are working to eliminate historic barriers that have led to limited representation of marginalized groups in these health professions.

Not only are these schools working to improve DEI internally, but they are also addressing community health issues, both through direct care and through culturally competent training and teaching. These undertakings are necessary to confront the significant health disparities among historically underserved populations. In spite of recent challenges caused or exacerbated by the pandemic, these schools have continued to push for a more equitable health care industry that promotes workforce diversity and provides accessible care for those who have long been forgotten by the medical community.

In this special section, INSIGHT highlights some of the colleges, programs, and individuals working to promote equity within their institutions and in their professions.

Two Southern Universities Join Forces to Recruit Diverse Students to Dentistry Field

More than 70 percent of dentists in the U.S. are White, according to the most recent data from the American Dental Association. To address the homogeneity in the field, the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry (UAB SOD) recently partnered with Xavier University of Louisiana (XULA), a historically Black Catholic university, to recruit students of color into this profession.

“We are excited to partner with [XULA] to establish this new early assurance program,” Carly Timmons McKenzie, UAB SOD assistant dean of admissions and associate professor, said in a press release. “This program enhances our efforts to recruit and develop promising students with backgrounds that are typically underrepresented in dentistry and prepare them for a career in this industry.”

The two institutions announced the start of the Early-Assurance Program in February 2022. XULA students interested in participating must meet minimum academic requirements and complete an interview process that will take place during UAB’s 2022 Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP). They will then be guaranteed early acceptance into the dental school upon completing a degree from XULA and taking the Dental Admission Test, a standard entrance exam for colleges of dentistry.

SHPEP is a free residential experience at UAB that takes place annually for first- and second-year students from across the U.S. to learn about health care education and careers. Participants are from underrepresented backgrounds and are interested in issues affecting underserved populations. The program’s goal is to increase diversity in medical and health care disciplines.

XULA students who successfully complete the interview process during SHPEP will be granted conditional acceptance into UAB SOD. They will also be eligible for scholarships provided by UAB.

“Xavier is proud to join the University of Alabama at Birmingham in partnership to provide opportunities that further develop the talents of students as they gain experience in their chosen professions,” Anne McCall, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Xavier University of Louisiana, said in a press statement. “It is the quality of our partnerships that matters most. The University of Alabama at Birmingham, much like Xavier, is committed to educating the future’s leaders.”

Medical and Other Health Professions Schools Guide Students on Overcoming Biases to Improve Patient Care on page 52
When the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines came to our campus, they went to Cleveland residents—and students from our School of Medicine and Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing were there to help.

At Case Western Reserve University, community engagement is core to all we do, from our School of Dental Medicine students providing sealants to local children in elementary schools to our social work researchers leading efforts to make Cleveland a “lead-safe” city. This year, more than 90 interprofessional student teams worked with healthcare and social service organizations across our region to assist in everything from patient education to clinical processes.

If you’re driven to make a meaningful difference even before earning your degree, Case Western Reserve University is the place to be.
PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT FOR EQUITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS TO ENTER THE VETERINARY PROFESSION AND SERVE SOCIETY BY ADVANCING PUBLIC HEALTH, ENSURING FOOD SAFETY, OR SERVING RURAL AREAS.

“The number of pediatric dentistry training programs and applicants has continued to grow, which I believe indicates a strong interest in caring for all children, and hopefully also those with special needs.”

Travis Nelson, DDS, clinical associate professor and the chair of pediatric dentistry at the University of Washington, in Dental Schools Seek to Limit Oral Health Disparities for Patients with Disabilities on page 70
PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT FOR EQUITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS TO ENTER THE VETERINARY PROFESSION AND SERVE SOCIETY BY ADVANCING PUBLIC HEALTH, ENSURING FOOD SAFETY, OR SERVING RURAL AREAS.

purdue.vet/VetUp
In an effort to improve health care inequity in rural areas, Purdue University recently announced that it will expand the Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering (RCHE). The multidisciplinary center was established in 2005 to research the affordability, accessibility, and quality of health care systems in rural Indiana counties and develop evidence-based strategies that can address critical health care needs in underserved communities.

“Our holistic approach puts the community and patient at the center for everything we do,” Pavlos Vlachos, the RCHE director, said in a news release. “We want to listen to patients and clinicians to identify needs and then harness Purdue’s vast talent to develop, test, and validate solutions. RCHE will act as a bridge carrying the benefits of research and discovery directly to the people they are designed to help.”

As part of the expansion, the RCHE will focus on improving four core factors: health systems, population health and health equity, health data science, and health education and communication. Ultimately, the center aims to employ technology, community outreach efforts, and the social sciences to connect with vulnerable populations, further equity-based research, and develop systems to improve health care outcomes.

The center is also leading the I-HOPE program, a partnership of more than 100 local organizations and the Indiana Department of Health, to reduce COVID-19 health disparities within 30 counties. Through 2024, the program will use nearly $35 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds to build health care access in underserved and rural communities.

“This expansion of work in health care improvement is a very important step for Purdue and for the people of Indiana,” Jerome Adams, Purdue’s first executive director of health equity initiatives and former U.S. surgeon general, said in the release. “RCHE will broaden and magnify valuable work already being done at Purdue to promote health quality. Until health care is consistently accessible, affordable, and of high quality, these will be our goals.”

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UCLA Dentistry Receives $1 Million Gift to Support Students Who Plan to Serve Communities in Need

The University of California, Los Angeles School of Dentistry (UCLA Dentistry) recently received a $1 million grant from Delta Dental of California to support students who are dedicated to practicing in underserved communities after they graduate.

The gift will endow a new scholarship for future dentists who have demonstrated an interest in serving underrepresented populations and have achieved notable academic success despite having to overcome hardship, according to a UCLA news release. Recipients from the school’s four-year Doctor of Dental Surgery program will be selected beginning this academic year.

“This wonderful scholarship aligns perfectly with the UCLA School of Dentistry’s long-standing commitment to recruit, enroll, and graduate students from underserved communities,” Edmond Hewlett, the school’s associate dean for equity, diversity, and inclusion and a professor of dentistry, stated in the release. “In our experience, many of these students know firsthand the plight of families and communities in critical need of accessible oral health care. Their passion to make a difference in their communities inspires us, and Delta Dental’s endowment will create more opportunities for them to become agents of change.”

This is Delta Dental’s second major contribution to the school. In 2018, it donated $1.5 million — the company’s largest gift to a dental college at that time — to support community-based clinical education at UCLA. That funding has enabled fourth-year dental students under the guidance of licensed professionals to treat patients who are uninsured or face similar barriers to care.

“We are proud to support the UCLA School of Dentistry’s mission to educate and train the next generation of dental practitioners,” stated Kenzie Ferguson, Delta Dental’s vice president for foundation and corporate social responsibility. “This new scholarship will help us achieve our broader mutual goals of increasing access to oral health care, especially for those in underserved communities, and providing opportunities for oral health education.”

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www.dental.umaryland.edu
Members of the inaugural Vet Up! College graduating class at Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine (PVM) don their new white coats alongside PVM teaching assistants, faculty, and staff, including Assistant Dean for Inclusive Excellence Latonia Craig (second row, far left) and Dean Willie Reed (second row, far right) at a special graduation ceremony in the PVM Medical Library in West Lafayette, Indiana on June 28, 2019.
In 2013, the field of veterinary medicine gained national attention for being ranked as the least diverse profession based on federal demographic data.

Nearly a decade later, the discipline no longer holds that distinction, but it remains almost 90 percent White.

Increasing the representation of people from different backgrounds has been a guiding principle for Willie M. Reed, DVM, PhD, dean of the Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine (PVM). Since taking the helm in 2007, Reed has led the college in creating a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategic plan, a diversity action committee, the Office of DEI, and more.

In that timeframe, enrollment of underrepresented students has risen from six percent to more than 20 percent due to a host of recruitment, retention, and support efforts. PVM has also introduced outreach programs and other DEI endeavors that serve communities and veterinary schools nationwide.

“Everybody at [PVM] has agreed that this is something we need to do because it is good for the profession and good for society in general,” Reed explains. “We have had a lot of people work on this and pull together to make sure that diversity is front and center.”

Latonia Craig, EdD, assistant dean for inclusive excellence at PVM, agrees that the college’s success in becoming the forerunner of DEI in veterinary medicine is thanks to the united efforts of the campus community. The students, faculty, and staff at PVM know that improving DEI in the field ultimately results in improved animal and human health overall, she explains.
“It’s not just the [DEI] office, but truly the folks in our college are always trying to do better, and they’re constantly trying to figure out how to do DEI right,” Craig says. “It is a part of who we are. DEI is in the very fabric of the college because of this teamwork and because of Dean Reed’s leadership.”

**DEI Training and Education**

As part of its mission to support DEI across the entire PVM community, the college offers a multitude of opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to learn about these principles. Educational opportunities range from brief online discussions to in-depth trainings and certification.

Some of the more recent offerings developed by the Office of DEI include the Virtual Learning Cafés. These hour-long sessions launched in fall 2020 following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd.

“My office received an overwhelming request for a space to engage in critical dialogue,” Craig explains. She surveyed the PVM community on what topics they most wanted to address and developed the cafés as monthly online meetings during Purdue’s common lunch hour so that everyone who wanted could attend. Initial sessions focused on cultural competency, implicit bias, engaging in difficult dialogue, and more. The events were so popular that the Office of DEI was inspired to make them a regular addition to their educational options.

No café has had fewer than 60 participants, and some have swelled to more than 130, according to Craig. This enthusiasm represents the passion and dedication of the PVM community when it comes to supporting DEI, she says.

PVM also offers the Certificate for Diversity and Inclusion in Veterinary Medicine program. Developed by PVM, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, the program allows individuals from veterinary institutions across the U.S. to learn about their role in supporting DEI in veterinary medicine. Five separate trainings are tailored for the following:

- Faculty and faculty administrators at veterinary colleges
- Interns, residents, and non-faculty educators at veterinary colleges
- Staff members of veterinary colleges and practices
- Pre-veterinary and current DVM students
- Practicing veterinarians and veterinary technicians

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the history of diversity in veterinary medicine. Participants must also complete community service hours, participate in DEI-related experiences, and submit a capstone paper upon finishing the modules.

Since PVM first introduced the program in 2012, more than 3,000 people have enrolled in the training, which continues to grow in popularity every year, Craig says.

PVM’s decision to help create and operate this virtual program for people both on their campus and across the country is just another example of how the school has assumed responsibility for ushering in DEI values to the veterinary profession, according to Craig.

“We want to ensure that when individuals go in to see a veterinarian, regardless of whether or not they share the same physical makeup or background, they receive the best level of care,” she explains. “When you go to see a veterinarian and you feel like there is not a sense of belonging or a community of care, that can really affect whether you continue seeing that vet, and the one who ends up suffering in that scenario is the animal. We want to be able to challenge this [issue] and provide individuals with tools to address it.”

VetaHumanz

One of the most innovative and expansive outreach efforts at PVM is the League of VetaHumanz, a 2021 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Inspiring Programs in STEM Award. This program empowers diverse veterinary professionals and students across the U.S. to serve as role models who educate underserved youth about veterinary medicine and the connections between animal and human health.

The program was founded by Sandra San Miguel, DVM, PhD, the associate dean for engagement and a professor at PVM. While the college has offered educational outreach programs for years, the league officially launched on January 1, 2020, as a result of more than a decade of support from the Science Education Partnership Award program of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, a part of the National Institutes of Health.

The league consists of teams of role models — many of whom adopt a superhero name and don capes — that travel to K-12 schools and community centers to deliver educational programming developed by PVM. They include veterinarians, related professionals, and students from DVM programs across the country as well as industry and nonprofit partners.

The college provides all training and materials, including curriculum and resources developed by PVM scholars and content experts. San Miguel explains that the program was inspired in part by an experience she had working with elementary students, during which a young boy of color lamented that he could not become a veterinarian because none of the children’s books about the profession showed people who looked like him.

“That moment changed my life and my career,” San Miguel says. “We started making books and games and resources where every kid could find a role model they could relate to, and we started engaging our students and veterinary professionals to get out there.”

Rather than serving as one-time educational sessions, VetaHumanz programs consist of multiple visits to classrooms, after-school programs, and more so that the team members develop relationships with the children they are instructing. The sessions provide a myriad of benefits for young people by engaging them in STEM, teaching them about healthy choices, and boosting self-confidence and self-efficacy.

Team members experience their fair share of benefits, too.

“We designed this program to benefit children, but we found that it had a tremendous impact on our role models and resources where every kid could find a role model they could relate to, and we started engaging our students and veterinary professionals to get out there.”

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The League of VetaHumanz offers collectible cards featuring veterinary “superheroes” to inspire underserved children to pursue their dreams of becoming veterinary professionals. Featured above are Allen L. Cannedy — AKA Goat Vet — the director for diversity and multicultural affairs at the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and PVM alum Vacques Hines, AKA Megalodon.
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veterinary students,” explains San Miguel. PVM is currently conducting research on these effects, such as becoming more comfortable communicating with people from different backgrounds and age groups. “[Students] have improved their cultural competencies, and they are reporting improved well-being. Veterinary college is quite stressful, and they say going out in the community reminds them why they want to be a veterinarian.”

The growing program has also expanded to offer SuperPower Packs for young people unable to participate in VetaHumanz’s in-person programs. These free kits provide books and other resources featuring diverse veterinary superheroes and are focused on special themes, such as vaccines or emergency medicine, that affect human and animal health. “These kids are seeing educational pathways, and they’re also learning about healthy choices for themselves and their animals,” says San Miguel. “Hopefully, we get them interested in STEM and science, and if they want to be veterinarians, that’s fantastic, but we also just hope we can reduce health disparities.”

**Vet Up!**
In 2018, PVM received a $3.18 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to launch Vet Up! The National Health Careers Opportunity Program Academy for Veterinary Medicine. The three-part program is also a 2021 recipient of INSIGHT’s Inspiring Programs in STEM Award. It offers extensive outreach, recruitment, and support for prospective and current veterinary students who are underrepresented in the profession.

Vet Up! is designed to provide “opportunities and support for equity-minded individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the veterinary profession and serve society by advancing public health, ensuring food safety, or serving rural areas,” according to the PVM website.

The program’s first section, Vet Up! Champions, focuses on high school juniors and seniors, first- and second-year college students, and adult or nontraditional learners. An annual cohort of 26 members completes a 12-month curriculum that includes regular online interactions with PVM faculty and practicing veterinarians, lessons on a wide variety of topics affecting the field, and a two-day stay on campus that includes hands-on experiences with animals.

This section provides crucial exposure to veterinary careers for people who may otherwise not have access to or knowledge of the field’s many opportunities, says Craig, who serves as the Vet Up! program director and project investigator. The college has found that it is important to start engaging with students as early as possible so they can begin planning their path to veterinary education, she adds. Thus, Vet Up! Champions teaches participants about setting goals early in
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their educational pursuits, overcoming obstacles, preparing a competitive veterinary school application, and more.

The second component of the program, Vet Up! College, launched in 2019 and provides a six-week summer residential experience at PVM for 26 undergraduates from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students have come from across the U.S., including Hawaii and Puerto Rico, to participate in this exceptional opportunity.

“They come to campus and live the life of a DVM student for six weeks,” Craig explains. “They take courses, we equip them with study strategies, and they get hands-on clinical experiences with animals.”

Being able to work directly with PVM faculty and animals has a tremendous influence on Vet Up! participants, she says. Applicants to veterinary school often need to have firsthand experience with animals in order to be considered competitive, but many from disadvantaged backgrounds have not had this exposure, she explains.

PVM keeps in touch with each Vet Up! College member via an outreach coordinator who tracks where each student is in the veterinary pipeline. More than 60 percent of Vet Up! College participants have been accepted into DVM programs across the U.S., according to Craig. Even those who choose to pursue other avenues continue to receive support from the college, whether it be assistance with applying to other postgraduate degrees or career guidance.

“Our commitment to them is that we will work with them until they get their degrees, and that is a promise,” Craig says. “While we want [participants] to come to Purdue, we are also interested in diversifying the profession, so we want them to be positioned for success regardless of where they choose to go.”

In the third section of the program, Vet Up! DVM Scholars, nine students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive intensive academic, social, and financial support after matriculating at PVM. The extensive services provided include daily group study sessions, regular meetings with mentors and faculty, the development of personal wellness plans, and more. Financial support includes scholarships in the first and fourth year of the DVM program and stipends to offset the cost of field experiences. The program is funded in part by the company National Veterinary Associates.

The scholars are required to participate in multiple leadership and DEI-related experiences. These involve monthly activities with student organizations, study abroad and other multicultural opportunities, completion of the Student Certificate for Diversity and Inclusion in Veterinary Medicine, and more.

Floyd Williams Jr., a fourth-year DVM student and Vet Up! College residential counselor, says the outreach and support efforts of Vet Up! were invaluable to him as an undergraduate. While attending the historically Black Prairie A&M University, Williams participated in PVM’s two-week Access to Animal-Related Careers program, which would
later become part of Vet Up! In a class on equine surgery, he got to meet with a veterinarian mentor and, he says, “be treated for the first time like a clinician.”

“That course alone really made me fall in love with Purdue and how they teach here,” Williams explains. “I don’t even see myself working with horses, but that day I felt like an equine surgeon. It really just highlighted why I wanted to go into medicine and gave me the feel of what I wanted to do.”

The program also inspired him to want to be a mentor to others, which is why he later joined the Vet Up! College program as a residential counselor. The experience taught him leadership, teambuilding, and a variety of other skills that have been invaluable in clinical rotations as he learns how to work with clients and other veterinary professionals from various backgrounds, Williams says.

Developing the extensive opportunities available through the Vet Up! program is “one of the best things [PVM] could possibly have done,” he adds, because it raises awareness of veterinary medicine for students of color who may otherwise never see themselves represented in this field. “This is already a very hard profession, and knowing that you’re potentially going to be the only person who looks like you do can be intimidating,” explains Williams. “Representation is a good part of these programs because it really shows students that this is an option because someone who looks like them was able to succeed in this environment.”

Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine is a 2021 INSIGHT Into Diversity Diversity Champion and a 2017, 2020, and 2021 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.
Beth Nelson, MD, (left) and other leaders at The University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School worked with students, medical residents, and faculty in 2021 to develop a new core competency focused on health equity.

Medical and Other Health Professions Schools Guide Students on Overcoming Biases to Improve Patient Care

By Lisa O’Malley
Race in Curriculum

A recent study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that medical schools commonly misrepresent race in their curriculum, including in discussions, presentations, and assessments. The researchers identified the use of “semantics, prevalence of disparities without context, race-based diagnostic bias, pathologizing race, and race-based clinical guidelines” as being the main ways in which biases take form in the curriculum.

According to the author’s recommendations, medical schools should do the following:

- Standardize language to describe race and ethnicity, such as using a country of origin to discuss genetic predisposition to disease rather than “Asian” or “African American”
- Appropriately contextualize racial and ethnic differences in disease burden, including always considering the structural and social determinants of disease
- Generate and impart evidence-based medical knowledge when it comes to race, such as reforming board examinations to avoid testing students on race-based clinical guidelines and racial heuristics

By 2018, however, there was still a lack of clear standards for what education on racial disparities should look like, according to the AAMC 2017-2018 Curriculum Inventory (CI). Using self-reported data from medical school educators and deans on their institutions’ curriculum content, researchers found that only 40 percent of schools were teaching about racial disparities at the time. Another CI report shows that for the 2020-2021 academic year, 70 percent of medical schools had anti-racist curriculum. However, on average, anti-racist content made up less than 1 percent of the curricula.

While it’s clear from this data that medical schools appear to be more committed to addressing social justice issues, continuous and intentional effort is necessary for trainings on racial disparities and biases to be effective, according to experts at the AAMC. “The skills needed to recognize bias, as well as the strategies to address it, require time and experience,” wrote the authors of the 2017-2018 CI report.

Leaders at The University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School (Dell Med) were aware of this need when they expanded the institution’s health equity focus in January 2021. After meeting with an advisory group of students, medical residents, and faculty, the school decided to add a new core competency focused on health equity to its undergraduate curriculum. Dell Med leaders hoped this requirement would “make the effort more visible and emphasize the importance the school placed on the content area,” wrote Beth Nelson, MD, associate dean of undergraduate medical education at Dell Med, in an email to *INSIGHT*.

Examples of the topics Dell Med students are now taught include the following:

- The historical and modern context of discrimination in health care
- Methods for identifying personal and interpersonal biases
• The effects of social and structural determinants of health on access to care

• Ways to examine one's own power and privilege and how these can be leveraged to advocate for health equity

The competency also includes a focus on intentional disruptive action built around the goal of teaching students to actively work to eradicate “systems that perpetuate health injustice and health inequities,” according to Dell Med’s website. As part of this requirement, students are taught how they can dismantle racist beliefs within medicine and intervene in situations where discrimination or bias is happening. For example, students will learn how to recognize barriers to equitable care — such as lack of access to language interpretation services — in their future workplaces and how to advocate for more inclusive policies and procedures.

Dell Med faculty and staff are currently working to put the new competency into action by updating problem-based learning cases to include prompts on health equity and ensuring all core clerkships have assignments and activities dedicated to the topic. In addition, the school’s Foundations of Leadership course now features content on implicit bias, advocacy, vulnerable populations, and more. Dell Med also has a health equity advisory committee featuring members from multiple departments who meet regularly to make sure the school is taking a “consistent health equity approach,” according to Nelson.

Yale Medical School (YSM) is using a similar strategy to guarantee that equity is addressed in every phase of a student’s academic journey. Last April, the YSM Office of Education introduced a new focus on health care disparities to its four-year curriculum. Spanning the pre-clerkship period to advanced training in the third and fourth years, the Health Equity Thread (HET) encourages students to confront systemic barriers to medical access and reduce inequities through education, advocacy, and research. In particular, the HET focuses on “issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sex, disability, and sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as the intersectionality of identities on access and delivery of care,” according to a YSM news release. The school hopes to integrate a health equity perspective into 50 percent of its curriculum by 2023.

In addition to educating tomorrow’s physicians on how to mitigate biases, medical schools are also working to ensure future leaders and administrators have the training necessary to take on inequities in the industry.

Arizona State University College of Health Solutions (ASUCHS), in partnership with the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine, offers a Science of Health Care Delivery (SHCD) certificate program aimed at developing decision-makers who can redesign and improve the medical system.

The SHCD curriculum features coursework on bias and disparities as well as health economics, population health, and physician leadership. Participants in the program are expected to examine their own unconscious beliefs by taking Implicit Association Tests, which detect whether someone has unconscious biases regarding race, gender, disabilities, weight, religion, and more. By taking these tests and reflecting with peers, SHCD students learn how pervasive these underlying beliefs can be and why it is important for future physicians to actively work to overcome them.

One of the key goals of the SHCD program is to empower students with skills and education so they are prepared to make positive changes that will improve the health care system overall, says Swapna Reddy, DrPH, JD, a clinical associate professor at ASUCHS. Through exposure to concepts such as implicit biases, cultural humility, medical mistrust, and more, students will be able to identify the societal and structural inequities that prevent patients from receiving quality care.

“[We’re] preparing the physicians of tomorrow to think of their role within the larger health care landscape and really understand the problems and challenges that exist within it,” Reddy says. “In many ways, it is preparing students to see themselves as agents for change within that system.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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Dental Colleges Welcome Teledentistry as the Next Step in Expanding Health Care Access

By Mariah Stewart

Just as telehealth has revolutionized medical care in recent years, the new field of teledentistry stands to forever change the way Americans access oral health care. As with virtual medical services, this form of treatment has been lauded for its ability to expand access to those who are underserved — especially people who are low-income or live in rural areas.
Teledentistry’s benefits include being time- and cost-efficient. Adults who cannot afford to take time off from work for a dental appointment can use the remote care option to reduce travel time and spend most of their time with a health professional instead of in a waiting room. This option also helps dentists, who are often understaffed in rural areas, to be able to see more patients, the American Teledentistry Association reports.

Despite these advantages, only 23 percent of dental students complete clinical teledentistry experiences, according to an October 2021 report by the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). While the field has been growing in popularity in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased demand, leading more dental schools to expand their services to include telehealth education and practices.

“Teledentistry is no longer the future. It’s here,” Laurence Gaalaas, DDS, a clinical assistant professor at University of Minnesota School of Dentistry (UMN SOD), told the school’s news website in 2021. “The doors that the pandemic opened to virtual specialty consultations and communication with patients won’t be closed any time soon.”

UMN SOD is one institution that has prioritized teledentistry education for many years. In 2004, it established a teledentistry network to connect university specialists to dentists and patients in remote rural areas. During the pandemic, the school expanded its partnership with community health centers for the delivery of oral health care services, ADEA reports.

Now, UMN SOD is working to develop an interdisciplinary teledentistry simulation training program for students.

“With the need to improve access to dental services — which is related to health disparities, geographic remoteness, the distribution of the dental workforce, and the COVID-19 pandemic — teledentistry simulation training will benefit not only the
Healthcare’s Diverse Future Begins Here

VCOM makes minority access a priority

Diversity and inclusion are key elements in patient-centered healthcare. As the population of the United States becomes increasingly diverse, the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) seeks to create a student body that reflects this trend by recruiting medical students from rural and medically underserved populations, underrepresented minority communities, and those with a strong commitment to underserved care.

students but also the communities," explains Boyen Huang, DDS, PhD, an associate professor at UMN SOD, who is leading the development of the new program.

Upon successfully completing simulation training, students will be able to examine patients remotely, record information, and generate diagnoses through teledentistry technologies. The school plans to launch the simulation sessions during the summer and fall semesters of 2022.

“This may further inspire future dental providers to engage with professional development opportunities related to teledentistry and other health information technologies,” Huang says.

In 2019, the East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine (ECU SoDM) established a provider-to-provider teledentistry service that

What is teledentistry?

Teledentistry is the use of electronic information, imaging, and communication technologies to provide and support dental care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, and the transfer of dental information and education, according to the American Teledentistry Association (ATDA). The tools that make this treatment possible include interactive audio, video, and data communications.

As with telehealth, the practice allows patients to access oral health consultations via a computer, phone, or tablet without physically going into a dentist’s or orthodontist's office. It can include a live video chat or the uploading of photos to a secure website.

The American Dental Education Association states that teledentistry has been instrumental in preventing oral health diseases in children and can be used to address small issues such as toothaches or more severe problems such as cavities and other dental emergencies. Advocacy groups such as the ATA say the practice is especially valuable for patients who otherwise struggle to access care, including older adults, rural clients, and patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
connects practitioners on campus with the school’s community service-learning centers and other providers throughout North Carolina. Of the state’s 100 counties, 98 are federally designated as dental health professional shortage areas.

ECU SoDM’s service uses intraoral cameras that allow practitioners to take images inside a patient’s mouth.

“The clinician can use an intraoral camera chairside to perform a clinical exam and project imaging to a remote provider,” explains Andres Flores, DDS, assistant professor and division director of Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology at the school. “In our experience, this significantly decreases the travel required, the number of appointments, the speed of diagnosis, and barriers to access to care for our patients, particularly specialized dental care in rural communities.”

In November, ECU SoDM and the ECU Brody School of Medicine received a $1.75 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to expand the range of such services. Known as the Consortium for Home-based Telehealth, the endeavor aims to leverage broadband and cellular access in rural communities and examine obstacles for underserved patients, according to a university press release. The innovative project will integrate dental, medical, nutritional, and behavioral care, says Flores.

Other higher education institutions in the state have turned to unique teledentistry solutions to improve care for its citizens. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC Chapel Hill) Claude A. Adams Jr. and Grace Phillips Adams School of Dentistry launched the Carolina Dentistry Virtual Oral Health Care helpline in March 2020 to help patients avoid the outbreak of COVID-19 and reduce the burden of dental patients on emergency rooms.
A NEW APPROACH TO MEDICAL EDUCATION

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Students Promote Teledentistry

The Teledentistry Student Group (TSG) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Claude A. Adams Jr. and Grace Phillips Adams School of Dentistry promotes teledentistry education and access through a variety of events, programs, and other efforts.

Established in the 2018-2019 academic year, TSG consists of dental, dental hygiene, and graduate students who advocate “for the implementation of teledentistry at our school, across North Carolina, the United States, and the world,” according to the dental school’s website. Specific actions include hosting in-person and virtual meetings, including statewide summits, and collaborations with other organizations that advocate for increasing access to dental care for underserved populations. TSG members are actively involved in conducting and disseminating research on best practices for teledentistry education and delivery. The group also participates in community service activities such as distributing dental hygiene supplies to those in need, educating parents about their children’s dental needs via telehealth, and more.

“We have continued to challenge the delivery of oral health care in our state, and this began because we were already thinking creatively about how to serve patients,” Nigel Shaun Matthews, former telehealth director for the school, said in a press release.

The helpline can be used to screen children in schools, the elderly in nursing homes, at-risk populations in remote parts of the state, incarcerated individuals, and more, Matthews explained in the release. In its first three months of operation, the helpline received 1,500 calls; patients were either referred to emergency clinics or their needs were addressed via computer or phone, according to the school.

UNC Chapel Hill dental students also recently established the Teledentistry Student Group. Members participate in research and community service projects and advocate for public policies that support teledentistry’s expansion.

The practice, however, is not without its critics. Some in the dental profession have argued that remote services are inadequate because they limit the use of X-rays and other diagnostic tools. Still, the overarching research suggests that telehealth is the next major step in dentistry.

“Health delivery systems, oral health stakeholders, and policymakers have a critical role in ensuring teledentistry’s parity is achieved to continue delivering optimal oral health services,” the ADEA recently stated. “Looking into the future, academic dentistry will be pivotal in educating and training the dentists of tomorrow on teledentistry modalities and offering a new perspective on the delivery of oral health care.”

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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A new study by Mars Veterinary Health (MVH) estimates that 75 million pets in the U.S. will go without health care because of a need for nearly 41,000 additional veterinarians by 2030.

MVH, the world’s largest provider of veterinary care and employer of veterinary professionals, recently published a series of studies to analyze this crisis and find solutions.

“We believe the veterinary workforce [shortage] may be the single biggest issue our industry will face for a generation,” MVH president Doug Drew wrote in an email to INSIGHT.

“Fueled by increased generational interest in pet ownership and the estimated 23 million pet adoptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, veterinary practices across the country are stretched thin.”

The surge in adoptions brought a heightened awareness to an already ongoing veterinarian shortage. The workforce crisis has contributed to long wait times at veterinary offices, higher costs for animal care, and mental health challenges among veterinary professionals, including burnout and depression.

Research has found that it would take more than 30 years of graduates to meet the 10-year industry need for qualified veterinarians.

“The number of U.S. veterinarians is increasing just 2.7 percent annually,” the MVH study states.

“Even with the new veterinary graduates expected over the next 10 years, a shortage of nearly 15,000 veterinarians (16 percent) will likely still exist by 2030.”

Multiple factors contribute to the shortage, including professional recruitment and retention challenges caused by mounting student loan debt.

Compounding the workforce shortage dilemma is a severe lack of diversity in the profession, with nearly 90 percent of doctors in the industry identifying as White, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

“The single most important issue that we have to deal with in this profession is the topic of diversity,” Andrew Maccabe, CEO of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), stated in a 2020 interview regarding DEI efforts. “Our profession must become more diverse if we’re going to be able to handle the challenges of the future.”

To address these issues, MVH and other private and nonprofit stakeholders, including colleges such as The Ohio State University, recently formed the Diversity Veterinary Medicine Coalition (DVMC). The DVMC aims to increase the representation of people of color in this field and improve access to quality animal care. Most recently, the DVMC partnered with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund to offer financial assistance to students attending historically Black colleges and universities. Starting in the fall 2022 semester, a select number of those interested in pursuing veterinary careers will receive need-based scholarships of up to $10,000 for the academic year.

MVH is also investing $25 million in student debt relief initiatives by 2025, according to Drew. This investment includes a collaboration with Banfield Pet Hospital, a network of privately owned veterinary clinics throughout North America, to provide

SPECIAL REPORT: MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND VETERINARY SCHOOLS

Colleges and Organizations Work to Address National Veterinarian Shortage

By Mariah Stewart

A rise in pet adoptions during the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the ongoing shortage of veterinarians nationwide. Companies such as Mars Veterinary Health (MVH) are working with private, nonprofit, and higher education partners to expand and diversify the workforce and meet the need for equitable animal care. Photo courtesy MVH
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- Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D., President, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Advocates Push to Improve Hospice and Palliative Care Training to Meet Underserved Patient Needs

BY MARIAH STEWART
By 2050, the number of people living in the U.S. who are age 65 and older will be 83.7 million, according to the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM). As the population ages, an increasing amount will be living with serious, complex, and chronic illness, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states. Medical experts and public health advocates say these demographic changes will require better recruitment and training for the hospice and palliative medicine (HPM) workforce.

“Although the number of palliative care programs has grown dramatically over the past decade, the physician workforce needed to provide appropriate palliative care, mentor, and teach the next generation of physicians in the core precepts of palliative medicine, and develop the knowledge base required to provide the best quality care for patients and their families, is inadequate,” wrote AAHPM Chief Medical Officer Joe Rotella, MD, and Board President Tara Friedman, MD, in a recent email to INSIGHT.

This is especially true for underserved communities, where there have been longstanding disparities in availability, awareness, and quality of end-of-life care. Black, Asian, and Latinx patients made up less than 20 percent of Medicare hospice patients in 2018, according to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. Mistrust of the health care system and a lack of diverse representation among HPM staff also reduces the likelihood of people of color seeking this type of care, according to the website Hospice News.

If more health care schools do not increase focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in palliative care, this gap will only continue to grow as the country’s population continues to become older and more diverse.

Research has shown that “current [HPM] training capacity is insufficient to keep up with population growth and demand for services,” according to a 2018 article in The Journal of Pain and Symptom Management. In addition to a shortage of specialists, studies have found that medical students receive little education in this area overall. Practitioners also lack adequate training in DEI when it comes to HPM, reports Hospice News.

“Quality care must include and acknowledge the importance of culture, recognize the potential impact of cultural differences, expand trainees’ cultural knowledge, and adapt services to meet the culturally unique needs of patients and families,” Rotella and Friedman state.

However, some policymakers are taking action to address these challenges, which have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, many advocates are pressuring Congress to push the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act (PCHETA) forward. The act was introduced in 2019, has passed the U.S. House of Representatives twice, and reportedly has strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate.

“Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for quality palliative and hospice care has only grown more pronounced,” stated PCHETA co-sponsors Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY) in a 2021 press release. “Hospitals have treated thousands of seriously ill patients under extremely stressful circumstances, and patients and their families have faced incredibly difficult decisions, often without the necessary guidance or expertise of a palliative care team.” The disparities in the impact of the pandemic on different racial and socioeconomic groups has only served to exacerbate inequities in access and care.

The need for better training and more practitioners is so great that the passage of PCHETA will likely not be enough to address all of the HPM industry’s challenges, according to a report by the Center to Advance Palliative Care.

“The most promising solution is to introduce palliative medicine into the medical school curriculum, so that future physicians of all specialties begin their careers with a strong grounding in the essential competencies of quality of care during serious illness,” the report states.

Some medical schools and organizations have also begun taking steps to expand and improve education in this area, especially when it comes to ensuring cultural competency among HPM providers.

The Duke University School of Medicine has introduced the Duke Palliative Care Racial Equity + Justice Forum to raise awareness of HPM care disparities and to “promote critical thinking about the way that [practitioners] show up for [their] patients, their loved ones, and each other,” the school’s website explains. “The series focuses on providing historical context and exploration of present-day implications of that history to equip staff with an understanding...
of how complex and ingrained racism, particularly anti-Blackness, is in our society and how it manifests.”

In October 2021, the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care (NCHPC) created the Equity & Inclusion Workgroup to “advise, recommend, and take specific action on regulatory, legislative, quality, workforce, research, and other issues related to DEI,” the NCHPC website states.

The workgroup will address comments and concerns on DEI efforts within the hospice and palliative care field and share best practices among the coalition’s member organizations “to amplify current work and avoid duplication,” the website continues.

In November 2020, The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) released palliative care guidelines for physicians to provide quality treatment based on patient culture, race, and ethnicity. Developed after more than a year of research in rural Southern communities, this is the first culturally based palliative protocol of its kind, according to a UAB press release.

“Lack of respect for cultural differences may compromise care for seriously ill minority patients,” Ronit Elk, a researcher in the UAB Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics, and Palliative Care, said in the release. “Until recently, culturally appropriate models of palliative and end-of-life care have not been available in the United States … [This protocol] is an example of what is possible when health care providers truly listen to the voices of underserved or underrepresented groups and build health care programs based on those communities’ cultural values and preferences.”

Such knowledge is an important asset for the HPM workforce, which — like the medical field overall — has been shown to suffer from a lack of diversity in addition to insufficient DEI education. A 2021 study in The Journal of Pain and Symptom Management reported that less than 5 percent of specialty HPM fellows identify as Black.

One institution striving to improve this statistic is the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, which recently launched a working group to address diversity in palliative care. The group is currently reaching out to mentor medical students, residents, and fellows from underrepresented groups, according to Paul Vermilion, MD, an assistant professor with the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC).

“Strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion is a top priority for departments and divisions across the URMC,” Vermilion stated in an email to INSIGHT. “Our intent is to build interest in palliative care as a specialty, and through collaborative learning to provide more culturally sensitive care for our patients, their families, and the community as a whole.”

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
The UConn School of Medicine is one of the most diverse medical schools in the nation. For decades, we have served as a national leader in the effort to increase underrepresented groups in medicine. From faculty recruitment to career opportunity programs that build pathways for diverse students, it is our mission to advance medicine academically, clinically, and scientifically while ensuring that the workforce we train reflects the patient population we serve in order to promote health equity. Learn more at medicine.uconn.edu/diversity.

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Dental Schools Seek to Limit Oral Health Disparities for Patients with Disabilities

By Erik Cliburn

In 2017, the National Council on Disability (NCD) reported that 75 percent of dental students had little or no preparation in administering care to patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs).

“Society’s ability to provide proper dental care to people with IDD rests on whether dentists are properly trained to provide such services at the outset, and said training has been all too scarce,” reads a NCD policy brief.

Fortunately, in recent years, some dedicated dental school faculty have spearheaded innovative programs to train their students to treat this vulnerable population. The dental schools at Texas A&M University (TAMU) and the University of Washington (UW) are among those leading the charge in equitable, disability-focused oral health care.

In 2021, Dan Burch, DDS, a clinical associate professor of pediatric dentistry at the TAMU College of Dentistry, secured a $3.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to bolster special needs dental care in the Dallas-Fort Worth area by increasing student and resident training. Burch led the initiative after realizing that thousands of people with IDDs, especially teenagers and adults, did not have reliable access to oral health care tailored to their needs.

While there are nearly 4,000 dentists in the metropolitan area, only about five treat adult special needs patients, according to Burch. “So it’s a huge disparity,” he says.

The first step in the process was the creation of the TAMU Compromised Care & Hospital Dentistry Fellowship, a postdoctoral program that offers fellows and dental residents intensive training on the treatment of IDD patients. This training includes knowing how to communicate with patients and caretakers and how to sedate or restrain patients if necessary, Burch says.

More recently, Burch and his colleagues have begun implementing practical special needs training into predoctoral courses and examinations. Students will soon begin the first round of rotations at several community clinics that treat IDD patients to get hands-on experience. Even if dental students choose not to specialize in this area, this “upstream” approach is vital because it can ultimately help reduce the patient load for specialized providers, Burch explains. For example, general dentists with this training are more likely to accept patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down syndrome, or cerebral palsy who typically do not require sedation, he says.

“We definitely understand that there are some advanced treatment modalities [general dentists] can’t do,” Burch adds, “but if they can pick up 20 or 30 percent of the [IDD] population when they graduate, that is a tremendous help.”

Burch is also working with donors to secure additional funding that will be used to create a clinic within the dental school for teenagers and adults with IDDs. This population is especially vulnerable because fewer dentists are willing to treat these patients as they age, partially because they are more

Following the National Council on Disability’s policy recommendations in 2018, the American Dental Association adopted new measures to prevent adequately trained dentists from discriminating against patients with disabilities. Additionally, in 2019, the Commission on Dental Accreditation changed its standards to require that dental schools train students in assessing and managing special needs patients, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
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likely to become combative and may require sedatives, he explains. The goal is to have a specialized clinic open in 2023.

At the UW School of Dentistry, faculty and students are working to enhance dental care access for special needs children, particularly those in rural areas. In 2020, the school was awarded $2.25 million by the HSS to launch the Interdisciplinary Special Needs Access Network (I-SPAN). Spearheaded by Travis Nelson, DDS, a clinical associate professor and the chair of pediatric dentistry at UW, the program significantly enhances didactic instruction for postdoctoral residents through various lectures, self-study modules, and exams. In addition to advanced special needs preparation, I-SPAN participants learn about rural health, substance abuse, cultural competence, nutrition, LGBTQ youth, and teledentistry.

“The number of pediatric dentistry training programs and applicants has continued to grow, which I believe indicates a strong interest in caring for all children, and hopefully also those with special needs,” Nelson says. Through the program, UW is developing the Interdisciplinary Oral Health Education Center, which brings together dental professionals and residents across different specialties to implement telehealth practices. I-SPAN also offers training to practicing dentists within the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) network. Once they have graduated, I-SPAN residents will act as “champions” within ABCD and provide expertise on telehealth applications and special needs care, Nelson says.

Although recent policy changes from the American Dental Association and the Commission on Dental Accreditation have opened the door for more equitable special needs care, innovative training programs are ultimately the key to solving the issue, says Burch.

“We need to let these families know that there are doctors that care,” he says, “that there are doctors who are willing to work on their children and loved ones.”

Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity. The Texas A&M University College of Dentistry is 2020 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.
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Despite Women Dominating the Veterinary Profession, Pay Gaps Persist

By Lisa O’Malley

In 2009, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) reported that women outnumbered men in the veterinary field for the first time. Since then, women’s representation has continued to rise; they now account for 63 percent of veterinarians, according to the latest AVMA data. Yet research shows that women still lag behind men when it comes to pay rates.

A March 2021 study from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine (CUCVM) found an annual gender salary difference of nearly $100,000 among the top quarter of earners in the industry. The research paper, published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, used data from more than 2,700 veterinarians across the U.S. to determine income differences between men and women at various levels of experience.

The pay disparity is most pronounced for recent graduates and the top half of earners in the field. Male veterinarians are also able to move into higher income brackets with lower levels of experience than women.

“Veterinarians can take many paths in their careers, all of which affect earning potential,” stated Clinton Neill, the study’s senior author, in a CUCVM news release. “Similar to what’s been found in the human medicine world, we found the wage gap was more prominent in the beginning of their careers but dissipates after about 25 years. This has large implications for lifetime wealth and earnings, as men will consequently have a larger sum of wealth at the end of their careers because of this.”

In addition to tracking experience
Veterinary practice ownership among women has been on a steady rise. In 2007, only 28 percent of women veterinarians owned practices; that figure increased to 41 percent in 2019, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association. The association predicts that by 2028, most private veterinary practices will be owned by women.

levels, the researchers also looked at how practice ownership and specialty certifications can affect income. Surprisingly, the survey showed that although men are more likely to own their own practices, this factor did not completely account for the wage gap. In fact, having a partnership practice is often more financially beneficial for women than having sole ownership of a practice, the study reports.

“When people discuss the gender wage gap, there is a general misunderstanding about the role of practice ownership,” Neill said. “People mistakenly think that there’s not a gender wage gap but rather an ownership gap between the genders.”

The pay disparity has been a problem for the veterinary industry for several decades now. Pepperdine University researchers first examined the issue in a 1997 study, and the AVMA acknowledged the gap in its 2003 economic reports.

Cornell’s researchers believe much of these deep-seated inequities can be linked to the pressure women face to adhere to cultural norms.

“In the workplace, I think there are unconscious behavioral expectations that often penalize women for advocating for themselves, whether it be negotiating for one’s salary or putting oneself in a position to advance to the next level within an organization,” said Jodi Korich, the associate dean for education at the CUCVM, in the news release. “These behaviors persist in many cases because they are unconscious. I think part of the solution is to raise awareness within ourselves and in our workplaces.”

Researchers have suggested that more transparency about income across the industry could help combat the pay gap. They also plan to explore the income disparities among different ethnicities and the effects of behavioral and societal expectations on women veterinarians.

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
The Office of Diversity Affairs at LSU Health Shreveport advances the academic medical center’s mission to teach, heal and discover by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion among students, faculty, staff, and leadership. Our programs and initiatives cultivate an inclusive culture that respects and celebrates diverse backgrounds, perspectives, experiences, and talents. From early exposure programs introducing high school and college students to careers in healthcare to academic success programs, these efforts aim to provide equal opportunity and access to resources to those who are traditionally underrepresented in medicine, research, and allied health professions. Visit www.lsuhs.edu/diversityaffairs to learn how we’re opening the doors to a welcoming community at LSU Health Shreveport.
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The mission of LLCC is to transform lives and strengthen our communities through learning. LLCC aspires to provide high-quality learning experiences for all seeking to improve their knowledge and skills while serving as a catalyst for economic growth that enriches our communities. LLCC offers accessible, affordable educational programs leading to transfer and career training degrees and certificates. LLCC offers over 125 degree and certificate programs and serves approximately 11,150 individuals annually through credit and non-credit courses. Students can find assistance with their academics through one of our many support programs and services which are available face-to-face and virtually. With 19 student clubs on campus, our students have several opportunities to get involved and connect with other students. Our athletic offerings include baseball, basketball, soccer, volleyball, softball, and e-sports.

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- DEI competencies in the curriculum, assess the impact of diversity on education, evaluation of the campus climate, and the policy and legal dynamics of affirmative action and diversity in higher education
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Position number 102897

Agent Associate-4H Dorchester County
University of Maryland Extension
Position number 114399

Coordinator-Data Management
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Ketanji Brown Jackson Makes History as First Black Woman Appointed to the Supreme Court

On April 7, Federal Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson made history by becoming the first Black woman to be appointed to a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. The U.S. Senate confirmed her by a 53-47 vote, which largely followed party lines. Once the court begins its next term in October, Jackson will be only the sixth woman and third African American to serve on the bench. Brown will also be the fourth person of color and second woman of color appointed to the high court, joining Thurgood Marshall, Clarence Thomas, and Sonia Sotomayor.

Prior to her nomination, Jackson served as federal judge in the U.S. court of appeals and district court for the District of Columbia, vice chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and an assistant federal public defender. She also served as a law clerk for Justice Stephen Breyer, whom she is replacing, from 1999 to 2000.

On March 21, the first day of the Senate’s Supreme Court confirmation hearing, Jackson delivered a powerful opening statement. She expressed gratitude for her parents, who experienced segregation before the 1970 Civil Rights Act but persevered and instilled in her a love of public service. Jackson also recognized Constance Baker Motley, the first Black woman to be appointed as a federal judge, and vowed to uphold the highest values of the court.

“[L]ike Judge Motley,” she said, “I have dedicated my career to ensuring that the words engraved on the front of the Supreme Court building — ‘Equal Justice Under Law’ — are a reality and not just an ideal.”

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